

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

High Level Officials Meeting

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**Written Joint Statement on behalf of: Republic of Belarus, People's Republic of
China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, Syrian Arab Republic, Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela, Republic of Zimbabwe.**

Refugee and internally displacement situations have increased in scope, scale and complexity where most affected countries are low- and middle-income facing their own economic and development challenges.

Robust collective, measures and efforts are urgently needed to resolve these humanitarian crisis and to prevent the prolongation of related humanitarian suffering through revitalizing international cooperation according to the fundamental principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

The Global Compact on Refugees reaffirms the centrality of international cooperation in implementing and strengthening the refugee protection system and realizing durable solutions. It stresses on mobilizing the international community as a whole to galvanize action for an improved response to refugee situations, with a view to broadening the support base in a spirit of international solidarity and cooperation.

In this context, and in order to translate the long-standing principle of international cooperation into concrete and practical steps, states should refrain from actions that impede the full achievement of durable solutions for refugees and IDPs situations through undermining the capacity and capability of other states and humanitarian actors to ensure timely, adequate and needs-driven humanitarian assistance, both for the emergency response and protracted situation.

Contrary to the spirit of international cooperation, burden and responsibility sharing and solidarity, unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) continue to be imposed, extended, expanded and implemented widely despite the fact that they bring humanitarian suffering, impeding the full realization of social and economic development, hindering the well-being of the population and severely undermine the livelihood of the people on the move in the targeted countries, including through depriving the people from access to humanitarian aid.

Political conditionality on humanitarian funding and UCMs caused multi-layered hindrances to the operational cooperation on the ground which reflected in the cancellation or delay in implementing humanitarian operations and projects aiming at strengthening the resilience of refugees, IDPs and their host countries and communities, access to necessary humanitarian aid and the availability of basic services, such as livelihood, food, health care and education and related essential infrastructure.

Moreover, unilateral coercive measures, given their wide scope and extraterritoriality, have a negative impact on the enjoyment and realization of all human rights, including the right to development of our peoples. This negative and rather dramatic impact has been increased during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, as recorded even by UN independent experts. As such, these illegal measures represent a massive violation of the human rights of over one third of humanity.

Extraterritorial application of national laws, secondary measures, and national civil and criminal penalties aimed at implementing UCMs, which result in over-compliance, exacerbate and expand their impact to every individual or company in targeted societies, third country nationals and companies, humanitarian organizations, donors and beneficiaries of humanitarian aid.

Financial and banking restrictive measures, including on central banks in the targeted states, imposed under groundless pretexts, create hurdles in processing foreign aid and handling humanitarian imports. One of the key impediments to humanitarian transactions in targeted countries is the lack of the ability or the willingness of primary and intermediary banks to take the risks of engaging in financial transactions for humanitarian operations.

All along the Covid – 19 pandemic, we have been witnessing how the harmful impacts of UCMs aggravate the vulnerabilities of refugees and IDPs, adversely affected the capacity of states to react properly to the emergency situations.

Despite the calls by the UN secretary General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to lift or relax these measures during the Covid-19 pandemic to enable targeted countries to respond effectively to the pandemic, UCMs continue to be imposed and expanded, where their deadly impacts became clearer by depriving the unhindered, timely, fair and equitable access to safe diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines, vaccines and essential health technologies and their components.

The existing emergency situation demands urgent actions to be taken to save lives and to uphold the ability of countries to maintain the necessary level of health care system and to alleviate the human suffering caused by UCMs in the course of pandemic.

The UN General Assembly resolution 46/182 stresses the clear relationship between emergency, rehabilitation and development. It emphasizes that emergency measures should be seen as a step towards long-term development. It has become undeniable in recent years that any real resolution to refugee and internal displacement situations requires development as well as humanitarian assistance.

UCMs hinder the provision of international assistance in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development, holding the affected populations back from their right to development, in particular by deepening poverty, increasing their vulnerability, pushing them to struggle to obtain most basic needs like health, education, and access to water and sanitation, to name a few.

Despite the negative impact of UCMs, affected States remain committed with the international cooperation in implementing and strengthening the refugee protection system and realizing durable solutions.

We express our strong condemnation at the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures that are applied in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and urge the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of such measures, that are inconsistent with the principles of international law or the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to ensure the effectiveness of national responses to COVID-19 pandemic.

We call upon all States to refrain from adopting, maintaining and/or implementing UCMs which undermine equitable burden and responsibility sharing, and calls on the member States as well as relevant UN and other humanitarian agencies to take concrete measures to mitigate the negative impact of UCMs, including by removing any obstacles in delivery of humanitarian assistance to the refugees.

We also urge the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its Executive Committee to examine the negative impact of UCMs on the refugees and States affected by UCMs including host countries, countries of origin as well as the work of

humanitarian organizations, to facilitate access to durable solutions and to mobilize resources to implement programs, or to strengthen programs already exist, for this purpose.

In conclusion, we believe that joint efforts by all States, international organizations and international financial institutions, in a spirit of multilateralism, genuine international cooperation, burden and responsibility sharing and solidarity based on the full respect to the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant UN documents, are required to alleviate the humanitarian suffering related to refugees and IDPs crises, assisting states to fulfil their protection responsibilities, and to create conditions for durable solutions.
